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Freight and Logistics E-News November 2010 (Vol. 8, No. 2)

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14th annual Freight and Logistics Symposium scheduled for Dec. 3

Sustainability: Does it Make Cents?

Sustainability initiatives may help polish the image of the freight transportation, logistics, and manufacturing industries as well as benefit the environment, but will sustainability also improve the bottom line of each? At this year's symposium on December 3 at the [Ramada Plaza Hotel](#) in Minneapolis, representatives from the business community, academia, and the public sector will explore the financial implications of sustainability on freight and logistics providers. Panels will offer national perspectives on sustainability as well as discuss the impacts of sustainability on business models, focusing by mode (water, rail, and trucking) on the pros and cons of sustainability in the freight and logistics community.



[Register online](#) or visit the [event Web page](#) for more information. You may also contact Shawn Haag, 612-625-5608, haag0025@umn.edu.

Freight-related research featured at recent MFAC meetings

The Minnesota Freight Advisory Committee (MFAC) met for quarterly meetings on June 11, 2010, and October 15, 2010, in Bloomington, Minnesota. October's meeting agenda included discussion of transportation research programs at the state and local level.

Laurie McGinnis, director of the Center for Transportation Studies (CTS) at the University of Minnesota, discussed several freight-related research projects at the University. One study to determine which factors are involved in truck driver retention concluded that basic cognitive skills are the largest predicting factor for the duration of a driver's employment. Another study involves the development of a high-tech system to provide truck drivers updated information on parking availability as they approach nearby truck stops. A third study analyzes the freight traffic between Minneapolis-St. Paul and Chicago. Researchers are also looking into different ways of developing supply chains that minimize carbon emissions while decreasing costs and maximizing profits.

Linda Taylor, director of the Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) Office of Research, discussed Mn/DOT research programs. Philip Schaffner, with the Mn/DOT Office of Multimodal Planning, discussed Mn/DOT's 50-Year Vision Initiative to ensure an "integrated, connected, and accessible transportation system" throughout the state "to provide safe, reliable options for mobility and competitive access to statewide, national, and international markets."

The meeting included other presentations as well. Bill Gardner, director of the Mn/DOT Office of Freight and Commercial Vehicle Operations, discussed Mn/DOT's Metro Freight Initiative, established to better accommodate area freight transportation needs. Peter Lynch, Wisconsin Department of Transportation freight operations program manager, discussed the truck oversize and overweight priority networks/corridors. In addition, Mark Meitzen, vice president of Christensen Associates, discussed an NCFRP research project about preservation of freight facilities.

During the MFAC meeting in June, Kyle Uphoff, manager of regional analysis and outreach at the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), presented information on how employment has been affected in the last decade. He also compared Minnesota industries to the rest of the country, gave future projections on the economy, and provided industry trends and projections on freight-related transportation industries. ([View Uphoff's presentation](#))

Mukhtar Thakur, director of the Office of Personal Rapid Transit at Mn/DOT, discussed the concept of Personal

Rapid Transit (PRT), which is an idea that would offer “on-demand, non-stop transportation using small independent vehicles on a network of specially built guideways.” ([View Thakur's presentation](#))

Lastly, Diwakar Gupta, a mechanical engineering professor at the University of Minnesota, discussed research exploring the relationship of highway construction and maintenance costs to different user classes. ([View Gupta's presentation](#))

The [Minnesota Freight Advisory Committee](#) (MFAC) is a partnership between government and business to exchange ideas and recommend policy and actions that promote safe, productive, and sustainable freight transportation in Minnesota. MFAC consists of representatives from Minnesota's shipper and carrier communities as well as a variety of other interested organizations, and provides advice to the Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) and the Metropolitan Council regarding freight issues and investments.

TRB mid-year meeting includes multimodal freight corridor and waterways track

More than 300 transportation professionals participated in the Transportation Research Board (TRB) Joint Summer Meeting July 11-13 in Minneapolis. This year's meeting—titled “Planning and Performance Measurement for All Modes”—was cosponsored by the Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT).

The event included a two-day Multimodal Freight Corridor and Waterways track that focused on better integration of water transportation into the national transportation system and integrative multimodal freight corridor planning at the state and regional level. The track was a substitute for the traditional TRB Annual Summer Ports, Waterways, Freight, and International Trade Conference.



St. Anthony Falls Laboratory stream lab

CTS helped plan the multimodal track, which included a tour of the University of Minnesota's St. Anthony Falls Laboratory, the world's only fluid-mechanics lab that uses a natural waterfall as its prime water source. Gina Baas, CTS assistant director of education and outreach, presided over the lab tour. Baas also presided over a session on shipper/carrier needs and perspectives on freight corridor programs.

Transportation professionals specializing in planning, finance, policy, economics, freight, and data systems shared information in open committee meetings, joint collaborative discussions, and general sessions. Tom Sorel, Mn/DOT commissioner, was the event's featured luncheon speaker. Former CTS director Robert Johns, director of the Volpe National Transportation Systems Center and chair of the TRB Technical Activities Council, presided over the opening session.

Related resources:

- [TRB Joint Summer Meeting: Multimodal Freight/Waterways Track agenda](#) (300 KB PDF)

Comprehensive statewide freight and passenger rail plan includes high-speed service

Dave Christianson, manager of freight planning and development for the Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT), discussed Minnesota's new comprehensive statewide freight and passenger rail plan at the annual CTS Transportation Research Conference in April.

Commissioned by the 2008 legislature, the plan outlines an intra- and interstate, intercity passenger rail system. “We are looking, in part, at the freight system because we are going to be utilizing it for passenger rail. We don't see any change in that long-range vision,” Christianson said.

Part of the plan calls for developing high-speed rail service with the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative (a nine-state effort formed in the mid-1990s) to connect the Twin Cities to the Chicago hub network. The system would advance incrementally, he said, starting at 79 mph on a shared freight network before moving to true high speed.

Under the plan, six round trips per day would be offered to Chicago. At 110 mph, the trip would take less than five hours; at 180 mph, less than three hours. Fares would be compatible with normal airline fares.

“Freight capacity in Minnesota cannot be diminished as we look toward instituting passenger rail in the near future,” Christianson said.

Over the next 20 years, total capital investment (in 2009 dollars) for both the freight and passenger systems is estimated at \$6.2 to \$9.5 billion, he added. The freight portion of the total would be \$2.2 to \$4.5 billion—74 percent from the private sector. The passenger portion would be \$4.0 to \$5.1 billion, with 50 to 80 percent of that from the federal government. After farebox revenues, the annual subsidy would be \$41 to \$95 million, he said, for a farebox recovery ratio of 48 to 69 percent.

According to Christianson, long-range targets include reduced or eliminated operating subsidies as ridership increases. Mn/DOT is projecting a 3 to 4 percent mode share; above 10 percent would pay for itself.

Moving forward, Mn/DOT will work with grassroots advocates to build momentum for corridor development and with the legislature to address funding issues, Christianson said.

Also at the conference, Brian Shorten of SRF Consulting presented results of Mn/DOT's research on Minnesota freight transportation by region. It is the first time Mn/DOT has researched freight by region in the state. From the results, Mn/DOT created objectives and plans to ease or advance freight transportation per region.

Related resources:



Dave Christianson

- [Midwest Regional Rail Initiative](#)
- [Minnesota Comprehensive Statewide Freight and Passenger Rail Plan](#)
- [2010 CTS Transportation Research Conference \(CTS Report, June 2010\)](#)

Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals Twin Cities Roundtable events

November 18 [CSCMP Tour and Dinner Meeting: Caribou Coffee](#) 5:30 p.m.–8:30 p.m. Caribou Coffee Corporate Office 3900 Lakebreeze Avenue North Minneapolis, MN 55429 Speaker: Paul Turek, Vice President of Supply Chain, Caribou Coffee

Previous events:

- [September 14, 2010 – Target Field tour photos](#) (855 KB PDF)

Please visit the [Minnesota Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals Twin Cities Roundtable](#) online for more information about upcoming events.

Transportation Club Expo scheduled for Mar. 22

March 22, 2011 [Transportation Club 2011 Expo and Luncheon](#) Ramada Plaza Mall of America 2300 East American Blvd. Bloomington, MN 55425

The expo, the largest transportation exhibition in the United States with more than 80 exhibitors, follows the luncheon and is free.

- **Luncheon Cost:** \$40 (\$45 non-members)
- **Contact:** [Transportation Club of Minneapolis and St. Paul](#) (952-239-1226, office@transportationclub.com)

FHWA 'Talking Freight' seminars

Upcoming topics and dates for the "Talking Freight" online seminars from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) are listed here. See the [Talking Freight Web site](#) for further details.

November 17, 2010 [Cross-Town Improvement Project \(C-TIP\)](#) 1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. EST

More news and information

- The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) on November 3, 2010, released its new version of [Freight Analysis Framework](#), the most comprehensive publicly available data set of freight movement. The [Freight Analysis Framework](#) includes data on the amount and types of goods that move by land, sea, and air between large metropolitan areas, states and regions. It is designed to provide information on national level freight flows across the nation's transportation network.
- In October, the [American Transportation Research Institute](#) (ATRI) unveiled its list of the top ten critical issues facing the North American trucking industry. The state of the economy tops the list in ATRI's survey of more than 4,000 trucking industry executives. The complete results were released at the 2010 Management Conference and Exhibition of the American Trucking Associations (ATA) meeting in Phoenix, the nation's largest gathering of motor carrier executives. A copy of the survey results is available from the ATRI Web site.
- A July 2010 report [Unlocking Freight](#), part of the AASHTO Transportation Reboot series, details the need to increase transportation capacity to deliver freight. The report includes new data, state examples of urgent capacity needs, and solutions to solve the pending transportation crisis in America's freight system. The report shows that investments are well below what are needed to maintain—much less improve—the movement of freight in this country.
- In May 2010, FHWA published the [Freight and Air Quality Handbook](#), which provides the background needed to understand how freight contributes to air quality issues, describes strategies to mitigate those freight-related pollutant emissions and improve air quality, and identifies funding and financing tools available for freight-related air quality projects.
- Recently published freight-related research from the Transportation Research Board (TRB):
 - [National Cooperative Freight Research Program \(NCFRP\) Report 7: Identifying and Using Low-Cost and Quickly Implementable Ways to Address Freight-System Mobility Constraints](#) (November 2010)
 - [NCFRP Report 5: North American Marine Highways](#) (August 2010)
 - [NCFRP Report 4: Representing Freight in Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Models](#) (August 2010)
 - [National Cooperative Highway Research Program \(NCHRP\) Report 661: A Guidebook for Corridor-Based Statewide Transportation Planning](#) (July 2010)
 - [Jointly released NCHRP Report 649/NCFRP Report 3: Separation of Vehicles—CMV-Only Lanes](#) (July 2010)



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